

COVID-19 Vaccination Distribution Plan Explained

By Jake Vinocur, MS, CIC

Across the nation the pace of COVID-19 vaccinations continue to garner daily headlines, often painting a picture of slow rollouts struggling under high demand.

While it's good news that so many people are eager to get vaccinated, the phased approach which prioritizes one group over another has left many with questions. Why can't everyone get a vaccine now? How come someone I know got theirs early? When will it be my turn?

National vaccine framework

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) national plan called for vaccinations to be rolled out in phases; partly because vaccine makers need time to make enough of the vaccine. And partly because a phased rollout makes it easier to distribute vaccines, many of which require special ultra-cold storage, across the U.S.

The federal government is placing an emphasis on vaccinating underserved populations in hardest hit areas of our country. We are likely to see mass vaccination clinics in these areas to ensure individuals in higher risk communities are protected.

States refine national plan

To orchestrate vaccine rollout, each state refined its own plan, all prioritizing frontline health care workers and older adults who live in long-term care facilities – two groups most at risk of infection.

In both California and Nevada, vaccine plans prioritize individuals who:

- Have higher risk for severe disease or death (due to age or other factors)
- Are unable to work at home (i.e., frontline essential workers)
- Live or work in geographic areas that have been highly impacted
- Are most likely to spread disease to other workers or to the public

This means some people will get their vaccine months before others, depending on a variety of factors such as age, profession, location, health risk, and living situation.

California's phased approach

Currently, California has three phases for vaccine distribution with more phases planned until everyone who wants a vaccine receives one. Counties then further fine-tune these phases based on resident demographics. El Dorado County's vaccine phases and tiers are depicted below.

El Dorado County Vaccine Phases and Current Eligibility

Vaccine Clinics, Registration and Eligibility Information



Note: Rate of progression is based on allocations made to El Dorado County by the state. Graphic will be updated as progression is made.

California has given approval to move into Phase 1B's Tier 1 group while continuing to vaccinate Phase 1A. It is important to note that although many people qualify to receive the vaccination now through this identified criteria, the state and counties do not currently have enough supply of the vaccines to deliver them to all of the people eligible. Additionally, county health departments and health care providers are approved to offer doses immediately to people in lower priority groups if doses are about to expire or would otherwise go to waste. This may be why you hear of a friend or neighbor who received their vaccine early.

California is working with a third-party to implement a streamlined vaccination process, though it's still in the early phases and will take time before it is rolled out. Most Californians will eventually be vaccinated at a doctor's office, clinic, pharmacy, or community vaccination site. Every Californian can sign up to see if it's their turn to get the COVID-19 vaccine at myturn.ca.gov. If you're not currently eligible, you'll be notified when it's your turn.

If you live in Douglas County

Nevada, like California, has prioritized frontline/ essential workforce categories and those in the general population with an increased likelihood of experiencing severe COVID-19 infection/disease. Nevada's prioritization lanes outline the order in which Nevadans will receive the vaccine.

Those eligible for vaccination through their workforce category will be notified by their employer, while individuals aged 70 and older can sign up for vaccination at a participating pharmacy within the county of their residence.

To learn more, or for COVID-19 testing:

El Dorado County residents can visit:

<https://www.edcgov.us/Government/hhsa/Pages/EDCCOVID-19-clinics.aspx>

Quad-County residents can visit or call: <https://gethealthycarsoncity.org/novel-coronavirus-2019/> or 775.434.1988.

To see California's progress on vaccine distribution:
<https://covid19.ca.gov/vaccines/#California-vaccines-dashboard>

As states and counties move through their vaccination processes, remain patient while staying attuned to your eligibility. Receiving your COVID-19 vaccination as soon as it's available to you will help keep our community healthy and achieve herd immunity.

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